



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Jane Robison, Assistant Chief
Media Relations Division
213-257-2000
JRobison@da.lacounty.gov
Twitter: @LADAOOffice

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Hawthorne Man Charged with 2004 Rape, Murder

A Hawthorne man charged with raping and murdering a woman in 2004 is awaiting arraignment, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Jaqwun Laerin Turner (dob 12/2/80) is scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday in Department 30 at the Foltz Criminal Justice Center in case BA437257. He is being held without bail.

Deputy District Attorney Teresa de Castro with the Sex Crimes Division is prosecuting the case.

Turner is charged with one count of capital murder and one count of rape in the death Leah Deshay Benjamin, 38. Her body was discovered on April 10, 2004, wrapped in a blanket in an alley in the 10600 block of South Manhattan Place.

Benjamin's murder remained unsolved for a decade until detectives from Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division were notified that DNA evidence identified Turner.

The special circumstance of murder during a rape makes Turner eligible for the death penalty. Prosecutors will decide later whether to seek death.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](http://da.lacounty.gov) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.